

The invention claimed is:

1. An adjustable armrest for a chair, comprising:  
an armrest base member;  
a support member slidably coupled to the armrest base member for movement in first and second directions between first and second positions relative to the base, wherein the support member is biased into the first position; and  
a device selectively retaining the support member in the second position, the device including a catch and a movable retaining member that is engagable with the catch to retain the support member in the second position, the retaining member disengaging from the catch upon movement of the support member to permit movement of the support member relative to the armrest base member.
2. The adjustable armrest of claim 1, wherein:  
the device includes a push-push mechanism.
3. The adjustable armrest of claim 2, wherein the push-push mechanism includes a track having a heart-shaped end portion forming the catch.
4. The adjustable armrest of claim 3, wherein:  
the track is formed in the armrest base member;  
the retaining member is rotatably attached to the support member and includes an extension engaging the track.
5. The adjustable armrest of claim 4, wherein:  
the track includes an elongated generally straight portion, and the heart-shaped end portion is angled relative to the straight portion.

6. The adjustable armrest of claim 5, wherein:  
the heart-shaped portion of the track includes two lobes that intersect to form a notch,  
and the track includes an extension adjacent the notch that pushes the extension of the retaining member into the notch.
7. The adjustable armrest of claim 4, wherein:  
the support member includes a padded cushion to support a user's forearm.
8. The adjustable armrest of claim 1, including:  
a spring biasing the support member into the first position.
9. The adjustable armrest of claim 1, wherein:  
the first position comprises a forward position wherein the support member is extended forwardly;  
the second position comprises a rearward position wherein the support member is retracted rearwardly; and  
the retaining member disengages from the catch upon rearward motion of the support member.
10. The adjustable armrest of claim 9, wherein:  
the support member is movably coupled to the base to permit side-to-side adjustment of the position of the support member.
11. The adjustable armrest of claim 9, wherein:  
the support member is rotatably coupled to the base to permit rotational adjustment of the support member.
12. The adjustable armrest of claim 11, wherein:  
the support member rotates about a generally vertical axis.

13. The adjustable armrest of claim 9, wherein:  
the support member is movably mounted to the base to permit vertical movement of the support member to provide height adjustment.
14. The adjustable armrest of claim 1, including:  
friction members acting on the armrest base member and support member to provide a first relatively high sliding friction when the support member is moved in a first direction relative to the armrest base member, and to provide a second lower friction when the support member is moved in a second direction relative to the armrest base member.
15. The adjustable armrest of claim 14, wherein:  
the armrest base member includes a slide member having opposite sides;  
the support member includes a guide member extending around the opposite sides and slidably engaging the slide member.
16. The adjustable armrest of claim 15, wherein:  
the guide member is made of a polymer material and has a C-shaped cross section forming a channel; and wherein:  
the slide block is disposed in the channel.
17. The adjustable armrest of claim 16, wherein:  
the slide member includes an elongated channel having a heart-shaped end portion; and including:  
a pin slidably engaging the guide member and the channel.
18. The adjustable armrest of claim 17, including:  
a spring that is compressed to bias the support member into the first position.

19. The adjustable armrest of claim 18, wherein:  
the slide block defines four corners, each includes a raised surface portion having a contour that closely matches inner surface portions of the guide member.
20. The adjustable armrest of claim 19, wherein:  
the slide block includes a channel; and  
the spring is disposed in the channel.
21. A seating unit, comprising:  
a frame;  
a seat;  
a backrest;  
a pair of armrests movably mounted to the frame for movement between forward and rearward positions, wherein the armrests are biased into the forward position;  
each armrest including a device selectively retaining the armrests in the rearward position, wherein movement of the armrests releases the device such that the armrests move to the forward position due to the bias.
22. The seating unit of claim 21, wherein:  
the devices include an elongated track having a heart-shaped portion forming a catch, and a movable retaining member engaging the track.
23. The seating unit of claim 22, wherein:  
the armrests each include a armrest base member connected to the frame, and a support member slidably coupled to the armrest base member;  
the track is formed in the armrest base member;  
the retaining member is rotatably attached to the support member and includes an extension engaging the track.

24. The seating unit of claim 23, wherein:

the track includes an elongated generally straight portion, and the heart-shaped end portion is angled relative to the straight portion.

25. The seating unit of claim 24, wherein:

the heart-shaped portion of the track includes two lobes that intersect to form a notch, and the track includes an extension adjacent the notch that pushes the extension of the retaining member into the notch.

26. The seating unit of claim 21, wherein:

the devices release upon rearward movement of the armrest.

27. The seating unit of claim 21, wherein:

the armrests each include a armrest base member connected to the frame, and a support member slidably coupled to the armrest base member;

the support member is movably coupled to the armrest base member to permit side-to-side adjustment of the position of the support member.

28. The seating unit of claim 21, wherein:

the armrests each include a armrest base member connected to the frame, and a support member slidably coupled to the armrest base member;

the support member is rotatably coupled to the armrest base member to permit rotational adjustment of the support member.

29. The seating unit of claim 21, wherein:

the armrests each include a armrest base member connected to the frame, and a support member slidably coupled to the armrest base member;

the support member is movably mounted to the armrest base member to permit vertical movement of the support member to provide height adjustment.

30. The seating unit of claim 21, wherein:  
the armrests each include a armrest base member connected to the frame, and a support member slidably coupled to the armrest base member;  
the armrest base member includes a slide member having opposite sides;  
the support member includes a guide member extending around the opposite sides and slidably engaging the slide member.
31. A seating unit, comprising:  
a frame;  
a seat;  
a backrest;  
a pair of armrests movably mounted to the frame for movement between forward and rearward positions, wherein the armrests are biased into the forward position;  
a heart and pawl device operably interconnecting the armrests with the frame to selectively retain the armrests in the rearward position, the heart and pawl device biasing the armrests towards the forward position.
32. The seating unit of claim 31, wherein:  
the armrests each include a armrest base member connected to the frame, and a support member slidably coupled to the armrest base member;  
the support member is movably coupled to the armrest base member to permit side-to-side adjustment of the position of the support member.
33. The seating unit of claim 31, wherein:  
the armrests each include a armrest base member connected to the frame, and a support member slidably coupled to the armrest base member;  
the support member is rotatably coupled to the armrest base member to permit rotational adjustment of the support member.

34. The seating unit of claim 31, wherein:

the armrests each include a armrest base member connected to the frame, and a support member slidably coupled to the armrest base member;

the support member rotates about a generally vertical axis.

35. The seating unit of claim 31, wherein:

the armrests each include a base connected to the frame, and a support member slidably coupled to the armrest base member;

the support member is movably mounted to the base to permit vertical movement of the support member to provide height adjustment.